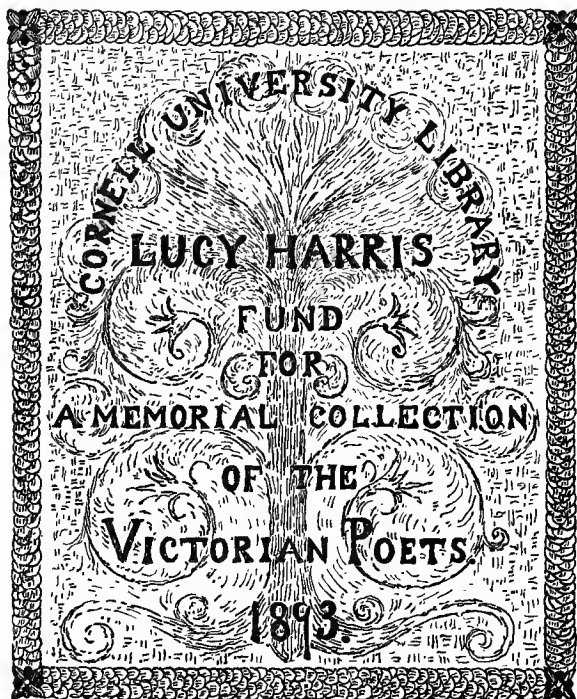


POEMS AT HOME
AND ABROAD

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Poems at home and abroad.



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POEMS AT HOME AND ABROAD

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MCMIX.

Poems at Home and Abroad

By the
Rev^d. H. D. Rawnsley
Canon of Carlisle

Author of
'Sonnets at the English Lakes,' 'Sonnets in Switzerland and Italy'
'Valete,' 'A Sonnet Chronicle,' etc.

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TO BERYL BRAMLY
IN MEMORY OF HAPPY DAYS
AT CASTEL DI POGGIO

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POEMS OF ITALY AND ABROAD

May-time on Monte Subasio

THIS is the Mount of God ;

These heights St. Francis trod

In days as fresh as is the springtide grass.

Yea, and he left behind

The footprints of his mind

Whereby who follow peace and joy may pass.

Wherefore when May is come

Men leave their city home

And all their work and all their cares below,

And seek the upper air

To find St. Francis there,

The haunting spirit of Subasio.

Eight days the snows have fled

From off the mountain's head ;

Not yet the herds upon the uplands rove ;

Unharm'd by goat and sheep

The bless'd flowers may peep

To give us happy welcome as we move.

2 MAY-TIME ON MONTE SUBASIO

Passed is the city gate
Where Rome once held its state ;
 Farewell brown roofs, old Castle wall and towers ;
Up through the sunburnt rocks
Cool for the fresh-leaved box,
 We seek St. Francis' world of thought and flowers.

How fragrant is the May
That blooms beside the way,
 How gold the broom, how green each hazel bush ;
There is no wing that stirs
The thorn and junipers,
 And over all there broods a solemn hush ;

There on their ruddy steep
The dead men lie asleep,
 They cannot hear what Tescio sings to-day ;
No lark is in the air
As up the silent stair
 We climb, unhelped by song, our mountain way.

But where with tufts of flowers
A grassy lawn is ours,
 And hazels cease, and cease the junipers,
Sudden sweet song is given,
Larks fill with joy the heaven,
 And at our feet the happy cricket chirrs.

Tired with the stony ways,
How must our feet not praise,
 Subasio, these long miles of grass outspread !
How could the heart not own
God gave no nobler down,
 Flower-sprinkled thus, for weary feet to tread !

For here without its peers
The towering orchis rears,
 The fritillaria hangs a mottled bell,
Shines the narcissus eye,
With turquoise jewelry
 The fair forget-me-not has worked her spell.

With thoughts of home most sweet,
About the traveller's feet
 The golden cowslip glitters far and near.
But better still than all
St. Francis seems to call
 ' Ye gave me joy, give these poor strangers cheer

Cool as the air of dawn
Across the fragrant lawn
 Comes a soft wind from distant worlds of snow.
Here Thrasymene shines,
And there the Sibilines,
 And there Abruzzi's hills in splendour glow.

4 MAY-TIME ON MONTE SUBASIO

From distance, lo ! we hark

The wolf of Gubbio bark,

And, where Bagnara 'neath Pennino lies,

I see the soldiers move,

Bearing the man they love

Home to his death, in pain, with blinded eyes.

Or there across the plain,

Purple and patched with grain,

Where grey Bevagna rests beneath the hills,

I hear the good man reach

Bird-hearts, with loving speech,

By which men touch the heart of wild birds still.

Then back my soul takes flight

To this untroubled height

The 'little poor man' loved long years ago,

When for his great heart's rest

He climbed the grassy crest

That looks on Carceri folded far below.

With what enchantment strange

The mountains, range on range,

Move through the hours in multi-coloured pride ;

Now grey with russet hue

Now silver-white and blue,

They boldly show or swift their beauty hide.

Now far away they gleam,
Then, near to touching seem,
 While over all in bluest depths of air
White cloudlets fleck the dome
Like choirs of angels come
 With pure desire to look on scenes so fair.

Here, on this hill of rest
With song and wild flower blest
 One presence haunts the ever-changing day,
Changeless in heart and mind,
The lover of his kind,
 Still Francis comes to greet us on our way.

He points us to the town
Wherein to him was shown
 Vision of palace, arms, and beauteous bride ;
Then tells us of the fight
Won by a nobler knight
 Than rode to old Spoleto in his pride.

He lets us gaze our fill,
Then leads us from the hill
 To where the Carceri gave him sure retreat,
Shows where in ilex wood
The angels brought him food
 And bids us be partaker of his meat.

6 MAY-TIME ON MONTE SUBASIO

‘Come ye, yourselves apart,’

He whispers to each heart,

‘And learn how little needs our earthly life,

Then forth like strong men go

From your Subasio

Of loftiest thought—peace-makers in all strife.’

On the Way to Rivo Torto

WHEN on that April day the prophet turned
His back on all that he had loved so well
—Mother and home, and through the forest
glade,

Sought, by the road the Roman soldiers made,
That coiling stream beside the leper's cell,
For him no young corn grew—no poppies burned.

Yet had he found life's surest anodyne,
The love of all earth's common brotherhood,
And in his hand he bore most precious seed
To be the bread whereon true souls may feed
—Sense of a spirit in earth and air and wood
—And in man's heart the power to be divine.

And we who wander through Mojano's gate,
Or at the cross-way talk with brother Giles,
Then forward go beneath the shadowy elms,
Feel the dark shame that well nigh overwhelms,
To think, though still St. Francis on us smiles,
We will not taste the heavenly food he ate.

8 ON THE WAY TO RIVO TORTO

Ah! would to God that through the rustling corn
Some leper from Saint Madelena's home
Would cry for pity, so that we might prove
At least there lives on earth St. Francis' love,
At least his great compassion still may come
To succour outcast sorrowing ones forlorn.

Now have we reached the stable by the well,
Have knelt a moment in the neighbouring shrine,
But no one asks our cloak, we are full fed
No need to seek for bits of broken bread,
And when the stars to-night above us shine,
We shall not share with beasts a leper's cell.

So, wrapt in thought, to home we turn our face
Cool towards the sunset over rippling corn,
Through silver olives, vine-clad mulberries,
Comes the soft air of eve, and as it flies
I hear a voice, 'Behold! ye must be born,
Born once again, to find St. Francis' grace.'

Then through the elms I hear a little bell,
Not that great thunderer—St. Francesco's pride,
Nor the deep bell beneath the purple dome
That masks and mocks the 'Little Portion's'
home,
A bell that speaks as if an angel cried,
The bell that rings where Clara used to dwell.

And as it rings, beside a rose in flower,
The sweet wild rose that touches every heart,
I see a grey monk kneeling in the way ;
He prays, and knows St. Clara too will pray,
Then rises blest, and never more apart,
Walks with her soul towards heaven in peace and
power.

The dream has vanished, but in all the plain
Henceforth there is no path so dedicate
To love as this, where moving up and down
To beg for alms in old Assisi's town
Called by the bell above St. Damien's gate,
St. Francis quite forgot his life-long pain.

And still each time with blessing in the air
For those who pass down Rivo Torto's way
The tinkling bell of Damien's church may sound,
There on his knees St. Francis will be found
As happy as a lover, sworn to pray
And work with one God gave him, Sister Clare.

St. Francis

*The Inauguration of the International Society for Franciscan
Studies. June 1st, 1902.*

To his seraphic city on the hill,
Not ever hid since Francis passed away,
From all the world we pilgrims come to-day
Because his heart on earth is beating still,
Because we feel the indomitable will
That fought its fight beneath the cloak of grey,
That bade men know they rule who best obey
And in pure love Christ's golden law fulfil.

True, knightly-hearted, simple and sincere,
We know thee now ; come forth with shepherd's
rod
And song of praise to feed us and to guide !
For poor men call, and still we seek thy bride ;
Star-flowers on earth, and stars in heaven shine clear
To lead us thro' obedience up to God.

bbath Dawn at Castel di Poggio

TIRED of the Pisan railway thunder,
Flash of the day and flicker of night,
Happy the man who sees the wonder
Of silent dawn from this castle-height.

Vallombrosa all lilac and tender,
Lilac tender on olives pale,
And the cypress towers in sunlit splendour
High o'er the Arno's sunless vale.

Not a sound in the tree-tops going,

Praise, yea praise for His mercy, giving
Strength to the toiler, fruit to the plain,
Another day for joy to the living,
Another day for the end of pain.

Praise from the city just waked from dreaming,
Praise from Arnolfo's wondrous dome,
Praise from the farms like white stars gleaming
Each with a gift of love and home.

Ring on bells, though the sheep are scattered,
And a thousand hills have a thousand ways,
Night shall tell that it little mattered,
For all were one in their need of praise.

Sunrise at Castel di Poggio

HIGH o'er the castle tower, and round and round
With leathern wings those fugitives from day,
The whispering bats, rejoiced in tremulous play,
And from the sleepy forest came no sound.
Soft was the air, but all Val d'Arno's bound
Was filled with sudden winter ; far away
White Arctic icefloe held unwonted sway
With minished hills of purple beauty crowned.

Red-gold and saffron, wondrous, bar on bar,
Brightened above the hills of Casentine,
And slowly rose the sun, so slow, the fawn
Felt not its shadow on the dewy lawn ;
And still as dark as midnight stood the pine,
And still o'er Vallombrosa hung one star.

The Vindemia at Degli' Angeli

THE ox was stalled, the last dark cluster pressed,
The last grape torrent to the vat was poured,
The knives laid by, the empty baskets stored,
The vineyard men and maidens all at rest ;
But in the courtyard were the tables dressed
With flowers of flame, and round the cheerful
board
—Not without thanks unto the Harvest's Lord—
The cup went round and merry was each guest.
Old toasts were given, and then beneath the blue
Of Fiesole's star-spangled Heaven we spoke
Our heart's content, and banished all our care.
Ah, never wine was poured, nor bread was broke
By gladder hands, while host and hostess true
Were entertaining angels unaware.

On leaving Florence by Starlight

WHEN the first saffron flushed the silver sky
Above the hill where Francis met his friend,
And thro' the homes of sleep—too soon to end—
The Arno like a tranquil dream went by,—
I passed from Florence. One bright star on high
Upon the Vecchio's tower stood still to send
Hope that the power of Heaven with grace would
tend

The fortune of that ancient signory—

There thro' the hushed piazza as I moved
From a bronze tablet on the ground was borne
A voice of exultation, and it cried
'Savonarola not in vain has died,
Still over Florence burns the star of morn,
The star of Faith and Freedom that he loved.'

From Orta to Varallo

Over the Colma.

COME! climb to Colma's western height
When Orta's mist at morn ascends,
When vines are filled with golden light
And chestnut shade befriends,

And hear a sound, that ever falls
With joy on ears of Cumbrian men,
Pellino's voice of might that calls
From out his woody glen.

Knitting with busy hands the while
The women lead their black-woolled sheep ;
Men bearing gourds upon us smile
To cheer us up the steep.

The children bring with liberal hands
Dark grapes warm-hearted from the sun,
Or where the threshers ply their wands,
With chestnut fruitage run.

We leave tall Aröla's tower behind,
Its vintage toil, its wayside stream,
By level paths the box has lined,
By golden gourds that gleam.

By ample barns, straw-thatched and warm,
Still up we climb the mountain stair ;
Pellino cools us with his charm,
And cowbells fill the air.

The height is reached, the ways incline,
Here angels surely love to dwell ;
The peasant pauses at the shrine
As if he felt the spell.

A moment stayed for sheer surprise,
Down to another world we leap ;
Sad women with their grey-blue eyes
Pass, panniered, up the steep.

Such tinkling music fills the air,
On the green slopes such walnuts stand,
Such chalêts peep, as on we fare,
We dream of Switzerland.

Now Civiasco's street we hail,
With leafage rosy in the sun,
And gaze on that grey gleaming vale
Where Sesia's waters run.

Deep in the woody gorge below
The infant Padus springs to birth ;
Though far to Adria's gulf he go
He leaves a sound of mirth.

And heavy is the peasant's load,
And dark as night the wanderer's care,
Who, listening, cannot leave his load
Upon the mountain stair.

And if the voice can bring no rest
He need but look with backward eyes
To where in gracious woodland drest
Those triple peaks arise.

Down, down by loop and gyre we went
Along the milk-white rock-hewn way,
With hearts brimful of life's content,
Upon that Autumn day.

Magnificently, range on range,
The mountains of chameleon hue,
Rose grey against the green, to change
To grey against the blue.

Strange towery cliffs of rock and wood
Stood up, like giant castles planned
To stem all fierce invaders' flood
And rule a peaceful land.

The chestnut forest climbed the height,
And in the depth acacia groves
Flashed emerald green, where lost to sight
The double torrent moves.

Then sudden, like a diadem,
White towers above the woodland gleamed,
We saw the new Jerusalem
Old Bernardino dreamed.

Ah ! who that knows of Life and Death
And hopes for Life from Death restored,
Would, at such sight not hold his breath
And pray to Christ the Lord !

At the Chapel of the Madonna del Belmone above Taponacchio, Fobello

THEY must have eagle's wings, the men who dwell
On this far slope beneath La Tourba's height,
But they have souls that dare a nobler flight,
For yonder shines their faith's high citadel
Where prayers are said, where rosaries they tell ;
First seen at morn and latest seen at night
The snow-white chapel seems a beacon-light,
A sign that Mary loves and guards them well.

Even as I gazed, with looks resigned and calm,
A shepherd went strong-hearted from the shrine,
And up impracticable slopes were driven
The goats, while to the chanting of a psalm
I heard young girls come singing home the kine,
And knew that labour here was blest of Heaven.

Ponte Gula

WHO, from Varallo, seek Fobello's height
 May hear the Mastallone all the way
Making rich music, happy in its might,
 And, like a giant, happy in its play.

But, when it nears to Gula's fearsome cleft
 The torrent seems to lose its playful mood,
And solemn moves, of all its joy bereft,
 As if it felt some deep inquietude.

Black are the crags, and even the autumn's gold
 No sense of gladness to its way can lend,
While lamentation as for sorrows old
 Fills the tall murmuring cliffs from end to end.

But, where beneath that ancient bridge it goes
 To change from green to silver and to sun,
Its moody waters quite forget their woes
 And on with laughter towards Varallo run.

How many a life in this strange world of ours
Has its dark gorge of loneliness and grief
So deep we cannot reach with human powers
And sympathetic touch to bring relief!

But Nature still abides, her hand can bring
Help to the heart in darkness doomed to move,
And sudden, makes a sun-lit opening
To give us back new happiness and love.

Bilâl the Muedzzin

*Written on reading a passage in Sir William Muir's
'Life of Mahomet.'*

GOD'S Mohammed is dead !
He of the Prophet's choice,
He of the beautiful voice.
Bilâl now sits in the gate,
Bowed and disconsolate,
Cannot lift up his head ;
And for his heart's great pain
He never will climb again
The twisted minaret stair,
Never will thrill the night
With the call of the Prophet to prayer,
Crying aloud in his might,
Over camp over castle and keep,
That ' prayer is better than sleep ' :
Bilâl is heart-broken, forlorn.

The years have flown and the hair
That falls on his bosom is white,

But still with unquenchable fire
Bilâl the Muedzzin must share
The shame or the glory of fight,
The fury of Mussulman war ;
Still must follow the host
That follows the crescent and star,
Still, whatever it cost,
Must mix with the conquering host
That, led by the Caliph Omar,
Will preach the New Faith by the sword.

And now from the blue sea's hem
And the shore's long carpet of grain,
Over the ridges of grey
That roll from Jerusalem
South to the Beersheba plain,
North to great Hermon, and height
Of Lebanon white with its snow,
The flame of the Paynim fight
Has flashed on its terrible way
Right through the heart of its foe,
Searing the land with its bale :
Yea, and the City that lies
By Pharpha, set like a gem,
Green in the golden sand,
Portal of Paradise,
Damas has opened its gates,

Has cast the crown from her hand,
Has bowed to the crescent and star
And owned the Caliph Omar.

So to the sea by the coast
Has passed the victorious host,
Down by the way where of old
Sennacherib's car was rolled,
Down by the rocks that tell
The power of Nimrod and Bel ;
And gathered there by the shore
Of burning Barytus they cry,
' Caliph command once more
Thy warriors all draw nigh
And hear once again from the wall
A blessing from heaven fall,
Hear as in days gone by
Bilâl the Muedzzin cry.'

Then did the Caliph Omar
Command ; and his men of war
Stood by the shore of the sea,
Silently man by man,
To listen the loud ' Adhan.'

And Bilâl clomb up as of yore
The minaret there by the shore,

Climbed, but in panting and pain,
Rested his breath to gain ;
Then with his face to the east
Waited till light be increased
And the rose should bloom in mid air,
And the Paradise gates uncloze,
And the star should stoop through the rose
To hearken the call to prayer.

He cried, and the listening sea
That before in its thunder was rolled,
Heedless of man and free,
Sank in purple and gold
To silence there on the beach,
And the wild fowl out in the bay
Clamorous ceased from speech,
And the dolphin stopped in his play.

For words by Bilâl were cried
That, echoing far and wide,
Seawards and up to the land
Fell like a charm and were heard
By wandering dolphin and bird,
Heard by the wind-deafened tide,
Heard by the sea-deafened sand.
And there 'twixt the rose and the star
There by the solemn flood,

Spellbound, silent, there stood
The army of Caliph Omar ;
Faces fierce from the scar,
Hearts made hungry by blood,
Hands made cruel by war.

For the quavering, wavering voice
Of the Man of Mohammed's choice
With ever-increasing power
To silver reverberance grew,
And the swarthy Mussulman crew
Felt on their heads a shower
Of sound, on their hearts a spell
Of a human resonant bell,
Waking old echoes that rang
From the past as Bilâl outsang.

Thrice over rampart and gate,
On the warriors hushed and still,
Fell with a magical thrill
The words ' Our God he is great ' :
Twice with unearthly tone,
' Beside our God there is none.'
And lo ! at the last came the cry,
Cry of an angel's voice,
' Brothers I testify
Mohammed was our God's choice,

Mohammed his prophet alone.'
And answered the trembling air,
Over the land and the deep,
'Prayer is better than sleep,
Worshippers come to prayer!'

And at the Muedzzin's call,
There by the sea and the shore,
Clear on the minaret wall
Sudden to sight there starts
He their leader of yore,
He of the godlike form,
Lord of their joy and of pain,
King of their calm and their storm ;
There by Bilal once again,
He the delight of their eyes,
He the fire of their hearts,
Giver of Paradise,
Mohammed beloved evermore !

Still the Muedzzin's call
Rang from the minaret stair,
Still from the city wall
Echoed the call to prayer ;
And at the sound there came,
Warm and bright as a flame,
Memory clear of the days

When they lived for the Prophet's praise,
And would die for the Prophet's word.
And each unbuckled his sword,
And each man leaned on his spear
As 'twere but a staff of wood—
Men made fearless by fear,
Men made careless by blood.
And sudden between their eyes
And the crescent beside the star
A strange mist seemed to rise,
And the tear was felt on the cheek,
And the strong were a moment weak ;
For the fierce wild men of war
Remembered the prophet's love
And all he would have them to be ;
And through them man to man
A sound like a night wind ran,
Sound of a sighing deep,
As a forest that wakes from sleep,
And sobbed with the sob of a sea
The army of Caliph Omar.

POEMS OF THE MONTHS

The Seasons

A Song from the Grasmere Play.

COME, sweet April, whom all men praise,
Bring your daffodils up to the Raise,
Bid the delicate warbler trill,
Come with the cuckoo over the hill ;
Sprinkle the birch with sprays of green,
Purple the copses all between,
Bend the rainbow and swell the brooks,
Fill the air with the sound of rooks,
Rubies lend for the larch to wear,
The lambs are bleating, and May is near.

August is here, and the speckled thrush
Sings no more in the lilac bush,
Lambs in the meadow cease to bleat,
The hills are dim with the noontide heat,
From all her hedges the rose is fled,
And only the harebell lifts her head,

But green are the new-mown vales with grass
As if the Spring were again to pass,
The children bring from the far-off fell
The rose-red heather the bee loves well.

Comes October with breath more cold,
She breathes and the bracken turns to gold,
The cherry blushes as red as blood,
The rowan flames in the painted wood,
The larch-tree tresses are amber bright,
The birch is yellowing up on the height,
And over the valley and over the hill
A deep hush broods and the sheep are still,
But rainbow gossamers fill the air,
The old earth rests and the world is fair.

Now are the mountains winter-white,
Helvellyn shines in the clear moonlight ;
The carollers sing and the Christmas bells
Send sweet messages up the fells ;
The old folk meet for their Christmas cheer,
The young folk skate on the frozen mere ;
But Spring is coming, the shy buds peep
And the snowdrop moves in her long, long sleep,
There is lemon light on the leafless larch,
And the wood grows purple to welcome March.

Fair, how fair, are the changing days
That keep us happy beneath the Raise !
We who in honour of Oswald, king,
Our 'bearings' still to the old Church bring.
We who here in the silent time
Act our part and carol our rhyme ;
Seasons change and our hair grows grey,
But merrily goes the Grasmere play,
And two things stay with us all the year,
Love of our valley—and heart of cheer !

A February Song

Now with tender pencilled cup,
And with triple wings of white,
Snowdrop-maidens flutter up,
Wakened from the winter's night.

Celandines are full of sun,
Daffodils in gardens shine,
And the sap begins to run
Thro' the tufted eglantine.

Now the birch with ruddier rind
Hears the tit call to his fellow ;
February's gentle mind
Turns the happy larches yellow.

Alders hang their purple flowers,
Hazels golden-tasselled gleam,
And the willow feels new power
Silver-studded by the stream.

Now the lilac trees gainsay

Every hint of doubt and sorrow,

Hung with tears of rain to-day

They shall laugh in leaf to-morrow.

A Spring Song at the Lakes

FROM o'er the winter-rusted fell,
From out the valleys purple-blue,
There comes the Queen we love so well
To her appointment true.

Not yet the music of her march
Has filled the garden-grove with song,
But rosy birch and yellow larch
Have felt her pass along.

She comes in mossy kirtle drest,
The first faint daisies in her hand,
The snowdrop glitters at her breast,
She bears an osier wand.

But neither moss nor flowerets fair
Avail to give us heart of grace,
The sun shines golden in her hair,
And triumphs in her face.

March—Summer

THERE is no day in all the year
To weary mortals given,
When God's sweet mercy seems so near
And earth so sure of Heaven,

As when, in middle March, we wake
To find Spring's promise true,
And summer falls, on lawn and lake,
Full-made from out the blue.

But yester-eve Helvellyn lay
Beneath a shroud of snow ;
Helvellyn, dappled white to-day,
His tawny skin doth show.

No wreath of winter now is seen
On Grisedale's lilac ledge,
The Derwent-vale regains its green
And purple grows the hedge.

The trout are leaping in the pool,
The rooks are calling loud,
The little lad scarce gets to school
So thick the daisies crowd.

The daffodil re-makes his spear,
And laughs the celandine,
While, floating far, and glinting near
The spider shoots his line.

Now starry-wide the crocuses
Are flaming in the grass,
And, gathering gold, the happy bees
Make music as we pass.

Lambs bleat, and either side the lane
New voices fill the air,
The cuckoo soon will come again,
The thrush sings everywhere.

The fleecy charges of the dale
Look, yearning to the heights,
Forth from the crag the ravens sail,
His love the buzzard plights.

The frolic wind, from out the south,
Sets hazel flowers asway,
Kisses the yew with merry mouth,
And blows its dust away.

All amber-tinted, lo ! the larch
Is gleaming to the sun,
The birches, at the call of March,
Have felt the red blood run.

And now the golden-hearted west
Scores Wanthwaite Brow with shade,
And, lingering high on Latrigg's breast,
The day is loth to fade.

But ere the blackbird cease from song
And robin ends his hymn,
The leaders of the starry throng
From out the sunset swim.

Jove's planet burns in crystal air,
The dog-star twinkles bright,
The summer day of March was fair,
But fairer still the night.

April Showers

CAME April, and beneath her feet the cloud
 Broke into song upon our silent hills ;
 The primrose woke, and thirsty daffodils
Tossed up their golden cups, a merry crowd :
Then visibly beneath his cold grey shroud
 Helvellyn moved to hear the cuckoo-thrills
 Make echo down the valley ; danced the rills,
The Greta sounded glad, Lodore was loud.

The white lambs gambolled thro' the sunlit grass,
 With jewels of the sloe the hedge was pearled,
 And golden shone the coltsfoot in the lane ;
No foot, no heart, but did the lightlier pass,
 For April tears had wrought another world
 Wherein was life and laughter after pain.

A Rainless April

COME, April, come with gift of smile and tears,
Not with thine eyes unable thus to weep,—
Hast thou no store of sorrow from the deep
To loose and laugh through, as in former years?
Come, let Lodore make music for our ears,
And rouse Helvellyn from his winter sleep,
Hang rainbow glories from the sunny steep,
And shroud at night with dew the glittering spheres.

For now the mountain faces, faint and pale
For lack of thy revivifying hand,
Swoon on, beyond their time, expressionless.
And now the flocks are milkless in the dale,
The cuckoo calls not, and the larches stand
Without a heart to don their jewelled dress.

The First Swallow

I HEARD the wheat-ear singing in the dale,
I saw the ouzel curtsey to the sun,
And cried, ' The days of winter sure are done,
The spring upon the mountains doth prevail,
Soon shall the cuckoo come to tell her tale.'

E'en as I spake where Calder's ripples run
To seek the shining Solway, there came one
Songless but sweeter than the nightingale.

From silent wastes and those dumb Memphian hills
Where dead men slumber in Sakkarah's dunes,
He came, he could not speak our English
tongue,

But as he flashed above the daffodils
On bluest April air he wrote in runes
That Love was near, and Life again was young.

Foxgloves at Brandelhow

Now lingers long the gold within the west,
Now twilit daisies shimmer silver-clear
Pale as the moon upon the dewy mere
Where lilies sleep ; the fern-clad mountain breast
Green to the sky, by white flocks is possess't,
And elders bloom, and roses far and near
Dance in the hedgerows, whilst, at dawn, I hear
The thrush sing loud about her second nest.

But neither daisied fields nor milk-white sheep,
Nor rose, nor song of bird, nor elder flower,
Nor hint of heather on the mountain's brow
Can wield o'er wondering hearts such magic power
As those tall foxglove spires, whose sceptres
keep
Imperial sway for June in Brandelhow.

June Twilight at Eversley

HERE all day long I sit and gaze
Where lupins grow and poppies blaze,
The Rhododendrons wall me round
With colour ; rooks make lazy sound,
Scented with May the soft airs pass
To stir the shadows on the grass,
While from her golden yew-tree's dome
A thrush sings loud of love and home.
How sweet from this embowered lawn
To see the distant tide withdrawn,
To watch beyond the meadow lands
Shimmer of sun on lilac sands ;
But sweeter is the scene to me
When back at sunset comes the sea,
When dark in western light the Scar
Stands up to wait the first white star,
And all dawn's mystery is made
To mix with evening long-delayed.

For then while cuckoo still awake
Calls, I can hear the incessant crake
—A conjuror, a ventriloquist—
Answer his own voice in the mist,
And watch the ranks of hedge and tree
Go marching to the twilit sea
Beneath their banners plummy-bright
Wove from the vapoury dewes of night,
While Whitbarrow in purple stands
Above the Kent's grey level lands,
And still out north the Langdales lie
Clear against lucent silver sky,
For here in June when stars are seen
Not ever wholly fades the green,
Still do the lupins whitely show
And still the scarlet poppies glow,
Till Eversley's high lifted lawn
Is glad again with song and dawn.

July at the Lakes

NOW has come the month of roses,
Children fill their hands with posies ;
All the garden plots are fair,
Honeysuckle scents the air ;
Meadow-sweet beside the way
Mingles with the breath of hay,
Rosy loosestrife decks the sedges,
Purple vetch is in the hedges ;
Now the butter-wort gives place
To the sundew's jewelled grace ;
Now we gather on the fell
Cotton-grass and asphodel ;
Bees make music in the limes,
Harebells ring their dainty chimes,
Chimes that only can be heard
When July has hushed the bird.

Underneath the sycamore
Shepherds count their fleecy store,

Neighbours come from far and near,
Neighbour-like the flock to shear.
Here the urchin fresh from school
Helps to load the clipping-stool,
Holds the tie for legs that kick,
Hands the tarry 'smitting'-stick.
Very grave the grey-beards seem
Tho' the bright shears click and gleam,
And the girls with laughter soft
Toss the fleeces to the loft,
While the little children run
To and fro in ceaseless fun.

Bark of dogs is in our ears,
And beneath the magic shears
Lo! the creature dumb from fright
Turns from tawny into white.
Then, at last set free, the sheep
From the clipping stool will leap,
While the lambs with plaintive cries
Greet their mother's new surprise,
And the dogs as wise as men
Push their charge from pen to pen.

Not alone the fellside farm
Feels the busy July's charm ;
Lo! the mowers' fragrant yield
Floods with grey-green waves the field ;

Lasses with sun-bonnets gay
Laughing toss with hands the hay,
Where the crake at evenfall
From a minished world will call ;
Strong of arm as they are blythe
Giants swing the giant scythe, ·
While the cart built up with skill
Leaves the dale and climbs the hill,
And the wildrose in the lane
Takes large toll from loaded wain.

Fair July ! a second Spring
Seems its emerald gift to bring ;
Green as April, bright as May,
Shine the meads just now so grey ;
And while still upon the height
All the rosy ling is bright,
Dalesmen happy in possessing
Haytide's spoil and fleecy blessing,
Thank the month whose genial grace
Ere it pass gives breathing-space.

Heather on Lonscale

Aug. 18th.

GOD, for the gift of the thunder and fire I fear Thee,
—Gift of the thunder and fire that gave us our
fells ;

But for the gift of this wonder my love comes anear
Thee,

Gift of the wonder of these multitudinous bells.

Oh ! the sweet scent and the dust of the honey
around me—

Oh ! the sweet sound of the brindled and golden-
thighed bees,

Oh ! the content which on Lonscale's round shoulder
has found me.

Rest that has found me where body and soul are
at ease.

Blue is the sky, a pavilion with clouds all
afeather,

Green is the plain where the aftermath shimmers
and shines,

But purple the million on million of blooms where the
heather

Sweeps rose-ingrain from the blue to the belt of
the pines.

Here then on Lonscale I lie, and its garment in
splendour

Grows as the sun sinks, and bees their soft music
prolong,

Weariless workers : and I, how can I, any gratitude
render,

Save but by rising from rest with new heart for
such labour and song.

September at the Lakes

In the Vale of St John.

GREEN are the meads, as fresh from April showers,
The scarlet creeper by the cottage door
Gives now its ebon fruit, and on the moor
The bee can tell how fast the honey hours
Fail with their purple glory : still the flowers,
Harebell and knapweed, braver to endure
The frosty dew beside the silver Bure,
Bloom on, and shine the rowan's crimson bowers.

Now smiles the plain, alternate green and gold,
The oats are housed, the farmer's hind may rest,
While as September's haze comes up the vale,
And gossamers float down and gleam and sail,
He feels grey Skiddaw's unlaborious breast,
And dreamy Derwent's arm his life enfold.

The Tropaeolum Speciosum

WHEN golden-poppy seeds begin to fall,
And lilies in their whiteness stand arrayed,
A flash of deep vermilion gleams to braid
For mid-July her fairest coronal.
First like a fly scarce scaped from out of thrall,
Its wings with dusky wrapping overlaid,
The shy buds cluster, then by sun's sweet aid
The fly becomes a trumpet on the wall
To blow forth summer's glory ; poets hear
And dream of genii homes and magic flowers
To wreath the walls of some enchanter's hold,
While from a thousand horns of red and gold
From morn to noon and night is sounding clear
The music and the march of honeyed hours.

Skating on Derwentwater

IN fairyland we revelled all the day,
Clear glass of gold lay Derwentwater's flood,
Far Glaramara mailed in silver stood.
And Skiddaw bright for ivory inlay
Shone purple clad with royalest array
To see our kingly sport. How leapt the blood !
As on from sunny bay to shadowy wood
We flashed above the mirrors steely grey.

But when the sun o'er Newlands sank to rest
Enchantment in the valley seemed to grow,
There, while the snows were flushed on fell and
moor
Loud rang the skates upon a lilac floor,
And burning upward thro' the lake's dark breast
Fire gleamed with unimaginable glow.

Christmas

THERE was no room when first the Christ-child came
There is no room to-day in halls of state
Where, in the wrangling clamour of debate,
Professing love, men slay love in Love's name ;
No room where commerce plies the gambler's game,
Nor where the gilded comfort of the great
Mocks its own sadness, nor where sophists prate
And the new learning puts the Cross to shame.

BUT in the simple hearts of labouring men,
Untouched by pride, by this world unbeguiled,
Who, knowing little, do that little well,
Still is there room, as once on Bethlehem's fell
The watch who kept the wolf-pack from the pen
Gave wondering welcome to the Christmas Child.

The Keswick Old Folks' Dinner

ONCE more, from hall and cottage home, we meet
About the well-spread hospitable board ;
Our foreheads are a little deeper scored,
A little slower move our aged feet ;
But still our hearts are young enough to beat
With Christmas cheer, and on our heads is poured
The peace and loving-kindness of the Lord,
Who bade us think of Him the whiles we eat.

Oh, Thou great Saviour, who of old wert known
In breaking of the bread, be here to-day,
And if from out the grave some cannot come
To claim our greetings and to give their own,
Let their loved forms and faces with us stay
Till all are welcomed to their heavenly home.

A Crosthwaite Belfry Song

January 1st, 1906.

CHEERY Crosthwaite ringers, climb your belfry stair,
Set your carol-singers carolling in air ;

Loud mouth and soft mouth,

Low mouth, aloft mouth,

Let the eight bell voices

Say the vale rejoices

That another year has gone—has gone with all its
care.

Set your ropes a-dancing at your captain's call,

Let the shadows glancing follow up the wall.

‘Single!’ cry, ‘Bob!’ shout,

In and out dodge about,

Till the vale rejoices

That the eight bell voices

Tell a happy glad New Year has come for one
and all.

POEMS OF THE BIRDS

The Chaffinch's Nest

At Dunnabeck.

THERE is a little cup of fate
Beside my trellised garden-gate,
A tiny cup most deftly made
With moss and lichen overlaid,
Wherein through all its strands is wove
The golden innocence of love—
A little loving-cup of life
And joy for feathered man and wife.
And therein, while the chaffinch sings,
A silent mother folds her wings,
Content to watch long hours apart
And press her jewels to her heart—
Jewels one day to find a voice
And bid the Junetide earth rejoice.
She knows her treasure-house shall be
Filled with new life, new song, new glee,
And roofs with her brown back the home
Against all rain and winds that come.

Bravely she sits though men pass by,
Meets questioning gaze with fearless eye ;
Unblenching though we giants stare,
Holds to her heaven-appointed care,
And shames us with a faith sublime
In life to be that keeps its time.
Far mightier powers than she has guessed
Bend like great angels o'er her nest :
The sun that rolls in royal state
Is with her watch confederate ;
The punctual morn, the sequent eve,
Their spell about her casket weave,
Till sudden with a heart aglow
A mother's triumph she shall know,
And life will fill the cup of fate
Beside my trellised garden-gate.
Ah ! would to God with such a heart
Our English mothers bore their part,
With such self-sacrificing zest
Would guard the home and keep the nest !

'Twixt Sunrise and the Moon

Now rosily and cosily

 The farmstead window shines,
Two stars are watching still in heaven,
 The moon is o'er the pines.

Now cheerily, unwearily

 Mike shuts the barn-house door,
And with his hay-sheet on his back
 Goes bravely to the moor.

With clamouring and hammering

 The village stithy wakes,
And smith and shepherd only know
 How dawn the daylight makes ;

For flittering and twittering

 The robin breaks to tune.
He sings the magic of the world
 'Twixt sunrise and the moon.

A Thrush in Spring

AWAKE and weary at the dawn of day
I heard thy music ringing thro' the hush ;
It made a hundred morning memories rush
To give me back mine old life past away—
A little boy at prime in garden play
I paused to wonder listening by the bush,
A youth, at early school, I heard the thrush,
And dropped my task, enchanted by her lay.
But most I well remember how that voice
Throbb'd in mine ears upon my wedding morn,
Bidding me rise my well-beloved to greet ;
And now in thy sweet tones as sad as sweet
I feel such sympathy for souls forlorn
That thro' my tears I hearken, and rejoice.

The Blackbird Dead

DEAD on the grass, and dead in spring,
With a nest half-built, what pitiful loss !
Look at his dress with its bridal gloss,
The soft grey satin of underwing ;

The purple eye with its rim of gold,
The glow and gleam of his amber beak ;
He sang of his wedding all through the week—
Now one is unwedded, the other lies cold.

Ah ! wild north wind from over the foam,
You have stolen the life from our April air,
You have hushed our morn and our evening
prayer,
Robbed us of melody, saddened our home.

But at least you have left us one thing dear—
The brown little widow so sad in the shade ;
And the bond of sorrow between us made
Has brought man's heart and the bird's heart near.

Sadness in Song

WITH swiftly broken sentences of song,
Ere yet the stars had faded to the grey,
The thrush began ; he fluted all the day,
And when the sun set did his tune prolong
In passionate iteration ; thro' the throng
Of inexpressible thoughts from far away
Came a clear voice, a solemn liquid lay,
A silver undercurrent sad and strong.

That was the blackbird. He who, though his bill
Be gold and gay, has never changed his weeds ;
For ever, though the crocus flame and die,
And buttercup to daffodil succeeds,
He feels that love is linked with sorrow still,
He knows how soon the little ones will fly.

The Chorus of the Dawn

How merrily with ceaseless tune
The chaffinch greets this first of June ;
The warbler lifts a quavering voice
To bid the brotherhood rejoice ;
The cushat coos, the cuckoo cries
Across the valley-paradise ;
With soft insistence from afar
A lamb is bleating on Nab Scar ;
Far off the kine their trumpets blow,
The cocks at dreamy distance crow ;
The moor-hens in the reed-bed hear,
And sailing forth on Rydal mere,
Leave silver light in arrowy track
Upon its mirror ebon-black.
Filled with innumerable wings
The sycamore beside me sings,
Wherefrom a thrush perched high above
Sends down such ecstasy of love,

That even the beck that seeks the mere
With eddying pause must stay to hear.
I too, though voiceless, still may tune
My heart to greet the first of June,
And join on this high upland lawn
The choral greeting of the dawn.

The Waking of the Birds

FIRST through the fragrant silence on mine ear
The blackbird's song came bravely, then the bush
Of dim white-flowering laurel, where the thrush
Warmed her young nestlings, throbbed with music
clear ;

Next roused the merry robin with his cheer,
The chiff-chaff answered, and in solemn hush,
Solemn, but with her monitory crush
And mellow mourning, hark ! the ring-dove near.

So broke the birds upon my night-time's sorrow,
For May was come, and tulips were awake,
And lake and vale lay brightening to the sun.
With happy cries the rooks cawed out 'good morrow !'
While the quaint landrail with his magic crake
For very joyance from his voice did run.

The Chiff-Chaff

LITHE of body, dusk of hue,
 Little courier of the sun,
We have waited long for you.
 Flower-time, shower-time has begun.
Larch is greening everywhere,
Birch-tree fragrance fills the air.

Poet, welcome to the west,
 Ranging from your Asian grove
To the 'Islands of the blest,'
 To the land of food and love,
Tell us prithee how you found
Your remembered mating ground.

By the ilex and the pine
 Did you see our budding thorn?
Thro' the olives and the vine
 Were our verdurous pastures borne?
Did pale lakes and mountains grey
Haunt you hither all the way?

Or where palms and cactus crest
All sweet privacy forbid,
Had you vision of a nest
In some English dingle hid ?
Tell us wanderer over seas
Was your lodestar one of these ?

Nay, but singing, ringing clear
Speed the message down the wind
That the guerdon of last year
Led you, joy of soul to find
That one sweetheart, tried and true,
Thro' a whole world followed you.

Sing and ring, thro' trackless air
She, you love, is following now,
Soon your ecstasy will share,
Soon will warble from the bough,
And to listening ears shall prove
How adventuresome is Love.

The Birthday of the Singers

Dunnabeck, 21st May, 1908.

THE cuckoo cried across the Rydal mere,
The little warbler made the birch-tree thrill
With passionate words of greeting and goodwill ;
Afar from ruddy Loughrigg lambs called clear,
On the near knoll the comfortable steer
Lowed, and the shepherd whistled up the hill ;
Then thought I, Lord, what joy these sounds instil,
What sense of fullest peace and rest is here !

But sudden in the pauses of the stream
That all night long its lullaby had made,
I heard such notes of wild triumphant mirth
Above a nest wherein five eggs were laid,
As made all other joy but sadness seem—
It was the song of life new-born to earth.

‘ Ubi Aves ibi Angeli ’

UNTIRED of will, with tireless tongue
From morn to latest eve has sung,
The thrush who, all through May and June,
Has kept my garden-close in tune.
There is no separate tree or flower
But owns her harmonizing power,
And feels to-day in every part
As if it had a brother's heart.

The crane is silent in the vale,
The cuckoos cease their wandering tale ;
But, still, as if it felt each morn
Some newer call for thanks was born,
This angel in the lilac-bush,
Impatient of a moment's hush,
Gives unto whom no voice is given
The note of praise that sounds in Heaven.

Fieldfares

How blue above our head the sky !
How brown below the path we tread,
By silent carpet overspread
From sombre larches standing by !
The berries in the hedge are red,
On which the birds should sure have fed,
Alas ! they long ago have fled
Who feel the frost and die.

But hark ! a foreign note I hear,
Along the fell, behind the wall,
A language I must needs recall,
Old talk made new with every year !
O'er northern seas, thro' sleet and squall,
These birds have come for festival,
And on the coral berries fall
To keep their Christmas cheer.

With ' tsik-tsak ' high and ' tsik-tsak ' low—
While perched far off their pickets stand—

These wandering birds possess the land
Our Norseman fathers used to know.

In voice, half quarrel, half command,
They wrangle on, the robber band—
Swift-wingéd Vikings from the strand
Of ice and winter snow.

I clap my hands, away they speed !
What matters where they rest to-night,
Beyond this vale are berries bright
And food where'er they wish to feed !
They know no law of tenant-right,
They only know they love the light ;
One law alone can guide their flight—
The law of Nature's need.

Ye red-backed rangers over sea,
Ye grey-winged rovers of the field,
Who, from what English roses yield,
Find life from lea to lea !
Those hearts must sure be hard and steeled
Who have no founts of faith unsealed
By your wild carelessness revealed,
This winter morn to me.

MEMORIAL SONNETS

The Village Naturalist

In Memory of William Greenip, 2nd November, 1890.

GOD often fills a poor man's patient heart
With His own reverent love and constant care
For all the things He hath created fair,—
Birds, flowers, the wings that fly, the fins that dart,—
And therewithal by nature's winsome art,—
Leads him to heights of philosophic air
Where clamour dies, Heaven's ether is so rare,
And bids him walk with gentleness apart.

Friend ! such wert thou : the Newlands valley dew,
The star o'er Grisedale's purple head that shone,
Were not more silent, but each stream and
glade,
Each bird that flashed, all dusky moths that flew,
All flowers held commune with thee. Thou art
gone :
And nature mourns the tender heart she made.

A Lake Country Guide

H. I. J., 1891.

ON moor and fell, in silent mountain places,
We meet him still to ask him of the way.
By pathless crag, where streams perplexing stray,
Each shepherd's track familiarly he traces ;
Or, where the Greta by the grey town races
And brims its pools, now solemn and now gay,
He mingles with the old men at their play
Or gazes on the children's happy faces.

But whether through green park or purple mountain,
Free on the sunny height, by shore or wood,
That never-resting spirit haunts us still !
His heart of hope springs upward like a fountain,
Who blessed the far-off future, and whose will
Was ever set to serve the public good.

John Ruskin

At Rest, Brantwood, Sunday, 21st January, 1900.

THE rose of morning fades, and ghostly pale
The mountains seem to move into the rain ;
The leafless hedges sigh, the water-plain
Sobs, and a sound of tears is in the vale ;
For he whose voice for right shall never fail,
Whose spirit-sword shall ne'er be drawn in vain—
God's Knight, at rest beyond the touch of pain,
Lies clad in Death's impenetrable mail.

And all the men whose helmets ever wore
The wild red rose St. George for sign has given
Stand round, and bow the head and feel their
swords,
And swear by him who taught them deeds not
words ;
To fight for Love, till, as in days of yore
Labour have joy, and earth be filled with Heaven.

At Ruskin's Grave

On His Birthday, 8th February, 1900.

To greet his natal day the heavens had lent
Unto his rest their fitting garniture,
The snow had fallen innocently pure
O'er him whose life was pure and innocent.
One way, it seemed, the footmarks all were bent,
As if the mounded earth had magic lure,
From out the grave to cheer and reassure,
A spirit voice continually was sent.

The silver mountains called from bluest air,
But he had entered to his prophet's cell,
New thought in deeper quietude to take ;
While from an unassailable citadel
In holy ground, beside the tranquil lake,
Came forth his mind to make the world more fair.

In Memoriam

J. R. A., 20th March, 1907.

YOU, who in Balliol days at work were seen
With him we called 'the Master'—him who bade
Us toil at Hinksey with the pick and spade
To give poor men a pleasant village-green—
Who, later, here in Crosthwaite's vale serene
Lived out your student-life, and plied your trade
Of seeking Thought, Art, History, Faith to aid
The quest for Truth that grew with quest more
keen—

Is it for nothing that your heart has given
Such strenuous work for wisdom, not for fame?
Nay, other worlds shall gain your store's
increase,
The seed you garnered yet shall fruit in heaven,
And here your memory be a man of Peace,
Who, loving light, toiled on till morning came.

Senator Hoar

1906.

YOU of the spirit fresh with *Mayflower* dew,
A Pilgrim Father faithful to the end,
Stout-hearted foe and truest-friend,
Who never trimmed your sails to winds that blew
With breath of popular favour, but foreknew
Storm followed sun, and, knowing, did depend
On One behind all storm high aid to lend,
And from Heaven's fount alone your wisdom drew.

Farewell! In these illiterate later days
We ill can spare the good grey head that wore
The honours of a nation. Fare you well!
When Love and Justice climb the starry ways,
And Freedom wins the height where angels
dwell,
They there shall find your presence gone before.

John Milton

1608-1908.

IN soft Autumnal sunshine to and fro

I saw a blind man faltering on his way ;

His face was delicate pale, his cloak was grey ;

He lived, men said, hard by at Bunhill Row.

I gazed and passed, how little could I know

That Milton's verses three hundred years away

With rhythmic thunder-roll would still hold sway,

And his sonorous prose like trumpets blow.

But this was he whose pen was as a sword

To shake the world and vex the heart of kings,

The man who saw the fading of his dream,

Yet held to the end his high imaginings

For freedom, felt Heaven's light thro' darkness
beam

And uncomplaining followed Truth the Lord.

The Gift of the Leigh Woods to Bristol

In honour of G. W., 30th March.

FLOW happier Avon downward to the sea,
And merchants happier spread your roving sails ;
These woods when back you bring your "Autumn
bales

Will still be here to give you golden fee ;
For now the lawns and leafy groves of Leigh
Proclaim the patriot's spirit still prevails,
And fearless in this vale of nightingales
The birds may nest, the children wander free.

City that knew Sebastian Cabot's face,
Where Cannynges worked and Colston grew to
fame,
Fling out your flags and from the topmost
tower

Let the loud trumpet tell this deed of grace,
For never nobler benefaction came
To give to toil, calm nature's healing power.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

10th April, 1909.

FOLD up the scroll ! He goes back whence he came
Silent to silence, but on earth his song
Sounds and shall sound while any tyrant-wrong
Or foul hypocrisy needs be put to shame.
Bind purple amaranth in his hair whose flame
Could never burn to ash, and let the throng
Be hushed, and bear the poet's bier along
To where salt wind and sea shall bless his name.

As long as Death, the intolerable thing,
Hurts men, as long as mortals are not free,
The spirit that gave his body to the dead
Shall sure return—not yet the dawn is red,
And lo ! to greet him all fair fountains spring,
All foam-flowers of the inviolable sea.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

We meet at Morn, my Dog and I

STILL half in dream, upon the stair I hear
A patter coming nearer and more near,
And then upon my chamber door
A gentle tapping ;
And next a scuffle on the passage floor,
And after that a cry, half sneeze, half yapping ;
And then I know that 'Oscar' lies to watch
Until the noiseless maid will lift the latch.
And like a spring
That gains its power by being tightly stayed
The impatient thing
Into the room
Its whole glad heart doth fling ;
And ere the gloom
Melts into light and window-blinds are rolled,
I hear a leap upon the bed,
I feel a creeping towards me—a soft head,
And on my face
By way of an embrace

92 WE MEET AT MORN, MY DOG AND I

A tender nose and cold—

And on my hand like sun-warmed rose-leaves flung,

The least faint flicker of the gentlest tongue,

And so my dog and I have met and sworn

Fresh love and fealty for another morn.

The Sorrow of the May

WHEN the pearl breaks into star, and the star breaks
into rose,

And the hawthorn scent is heavy on the fragrant
June-tide air,

My eyes forget their seeing, and my heart renews its
woes

For I think of that old thorn-time when first I
met my fair.

How simply was she dressed in her petticoat of blue
And her rosy pink sun-bonnet ! She was Grasmere's
sweetest lass,

And the face of her was open and the eyes of her
were true,

And her milk-pail swung beside her, as she moved
to let me pass.

I was fain to bear the milk-pail, the flush was in her
face

As I took it bravely from her, and I touched her
tender hand,

And I broke a white May-blossom, and she wore it
with such grace

That she seemed no village maiden but a lady of
the land.

We were wed within the year, and when now a
second time

The pearls had broke to starlight and the rose was
on the thorn,

So proud to be a mother, she was dying in her prime,
Only lived to kiss her darling when our little May
was born.

Now each year beneath Stone-Arthur when the May-
blossom is white

And the hawthorn scent is heavy on the meadows
in the dale,

I forget the sheep I counted, and my eyes forget
their sight,

For I see the lass who loved me, with her shining
milking-pail.

The Fiddler's Funeral

LET the deep bell
Not dolefully tell
That a dead man is coming to rest by the steeple ;
Bear him along
And sing him a song,
For he gave so many a song to the people.

Not a farm round
But knew of the sound
Of the wavering voice and the quavering fiddle ;
Not a man or maid
But had danced, as he played,
' Set to the corners ' and then ' down the middle.'

Never a school
But knew of his rule,
The ' three reel,' ' the jig,' and the ' square cornered
eight ' ;
Never a guest
At a wedding, but blessed
The flash of his bow and the nod of his pate.

And not a child
Of the village but smiled
To see the kind face and to hark to his humming ;
Never a lass
Of the fellside could pass,
But must turn just to ask when the Fiddler was
coming.

Oh ! he was so cheering
At hiring and shearing,
None like old Dick o' the Dale ever sings ;
And he was so steady
Of time, and so ready
Of tune.—He was ready when Death snapt the strings.

Old Dick o' the Dale
Is not dead, he is hale
In the hearts of the humble, whose joy was his
pleasure ;
Where he sleeps, from the ground
There will rise the sweet sound
—That air, ' Jack-my-laddie,' his favourite measure.

This day it is sad
For the lass and the lad
Who will never more dance to his tune down the
middle ;

But I hear 'Home sweet Home,'
As he played it ; so come,
Let us all follow on to the call of his fiddle.

So toll not the bell
With a funeral knell
For the dead man they carry to rest by the steeple ;
Bear him along
And sing him a song
Who played so, and sang so, to hearten the people.

A Westmoreland Song

RUST-RED are the mountains

And white fall the fountains

When over Helvellyn fly winterly gales ;

But green when the comer,

Who brings us the summer,

The cuckoo calls clear o'er the Westmoreland dales.

When bracken was springing

The live air was ringing,

The lambs with loud chorus filled valleys below ;

Now bracken is umber,

How deep is the slumber

Of mountains that wait for the silence of snow.

But oh ! for the weather

That brought us the heather,

When high Pike o' Stickle and Easdale were bright ;

And oh ! the long gloamings

Of May, for the roamings

O'er hills that were never quite darkened with night.

The clouds are your children, the streams are ;
birth ;
When tear-drops fall quickly,
And clouds gather thickly, .
Your calm and your hope bring new comfort
Earth.

The Westmoreland Emigrant

FROM Death to Life the silent plain
Is changed by magic powers,
And merrily the bullock-wain
Moves axle-deep in flowers.

But I would be where sound is heard,
Where Sour-milk ghyll is falling,
And thro' the blue-bell copse the bird
Is 'cuckoo ! cuckoo !' calling.

From fenceless fields in freedom rolled
A wider air we breathe it,
I'd choose the intack and the fold,
The narrow vale beneath it.

Let others for a kingdom take
The treeless prairie ranches,
Give me a glimpse of Rydal Lake,
Seen bright among the branches.

Oh ! hills and lakes divinely blue,
Oh ! mountains black with thunder,
Oh ! mists that let the sunshine thro'
Or wrap the valleys under.

Ye bleating brothers of the fern
In lonely mountain places,
How oft with crook and dog I yearn
To see your dappled faces.

Oh ! happy times, when on the heights
We sought the sheep for shearing,
Oh ! jolly Christmas merry-nights
With song and dance so cheering.

Grey walls that climb the mountain side
Or sink to valleys tender,
Loud streams that shine, and ghylls that hide,
What homage can I render,

Save this, that whereso'er I go,
Till fortune may restore me,
The hills of Westmoreland I know,
Shall always rise before me ?

Home from Italy

THERE are no snow-white oxen in the dales
To drag with rolling gait the narrow wain ;
No cypress plumes the hill, and in the plain
I scent no vines, I hear no nightingales ;
But the same rose, whose beauty there prevails,
Shuts her pink petals from the gentle rain ;
The same swifts cry above the topmost vane,
And high in air the self-same buzzard sails.

Thro' silent sunburnt flats no Tiber streams,
No Amiata shines divinely blue,
No purple city dreams about its dome ;
But Skiddaw lifts his bulk of changeful hue,
Thro' lush green meads the Greta sounds and gleams,
And one fair garden calls the wanderer home.

At Dunnabeck

WITH just such wings the buzzard flew,
So cuckoo called to cheer
The wild unmeditative crew
Who held their rampart here.

So gleamed the mere, so rose the Scar
Magnificently grey,
So from its fountain-head afar
The streamlet poured away.

A few rough walls the shepherds make
To curb their flocks that range,
A white road glimmering by the lake,—
There is no other change.

Nor change in these transcendent powers
Of rock and lake and hill,
They spake in prehistoric hours
And they are speaking still.

But since the Rydal bard was sent
To show us Nature's plan,
The bar is broke, the veil is rent
'Twixt God and Godlike man.

Now whoso from this lawn would look
On hill, or lake, or grove,
May read the Spiritual book
Of universal love.

Oh! British holders of your 'Dun,'
To think ye passed away
Beyond the sunset ere the sun
Had brought this blessed day!

Ye could have given a simpler heart
And ears less deaf than mine,
To feel what Nature could impart
Of mystery divine.

Come back, come back from out your dust,
And let this scene declare,
Its revelation held in trust
For every age to share.

NOTE.—It is believed that the early Britons held a fort upon the ridge above White-Moss, and that Dunnabeck—the beck or water of the Dun—preserves the name of the place of their encampment.

Dawn in Greece and Cumberland— A Contrast

COME from a silent land where few birds sing,
And men unhelped fare forth to meet the day,
Beneath an English dawn fresh-waked I lay,
And heard thro' dewy air the garden ring
With joy and hope exultant for the Spring—
The blackbird piped his welcome to the May,
And the clear-fluting thrush upon the spray
Told of her love and life's sweet triumphing.

I could not wonder how, by Grecian seas,
The men who plant the vine and tend the herds
Go gladly to their toil and home return,
Thrice weary, seeing no music of the birds
Sounds when with morn the heights of Parnes
burn,
Or sunset gilds Athena's olive trees.

The Stag Impaled

WITH head drawn back, and heaving flank distressed
It hears the hounds—the hunter's bugle ring,
What hand shall save the tame unantlered thing,
What covert give the harmless creature rest?
Down the long vale, and o'er the woodland crest,
Across the flood, with piteous fear for wing
It speeds, then leaps, and with a desperate spring
Hangs mute, impaled, the fence-spear in its breast.
When shall the heart of gentler England prove
Its pure compassion for all needless pain ;
When shall we learn the bond of brotherhood
'Twixt man and these wild creatures of the
wood,
And nobler days of sport bring nobler gain,
For manhood sworn to pity and to love ?

Jupiter and Venus

HIGH in the twilight silver of the west,
When still the zenith trembled into green,
Two gleaming planetary lamps were seen
Hung white above Helvellyn's ebon crest ;
The wide-eyed Hunter stayed him on his quest,
Belted Orion on his sword did lean
Wond'ring, while she of all men's hearts the queen
Went down the slopes of evening to her rest.

Then did I note how great seven-moonèd Jove—
The God of power—was captive to her chain ;
How all the host of Heaven in starry drove
Moved with her to the mountains and the main ;
I cried, ' Wheel nearer Earth, thou world of Love !
And take our darkened planet in thy train ! '

A Shadow on Scafell

In Memoriam Prof. A. Milne Marshall, of Owens College, Manchester, who died by a fall from the crags above Lord's Rake on Scafell, 31st December, 1893.

CLEAR shines the heaven above our New Year's
Day,

The sunlight gleams by Wastdale's desolate shore
And streams o'er grassy Gavel, and the floor
Of Derwentwater glitters gold and gay.

But one great shadow lingering seems to stay
Dark on Scafell, beneath its summit hoar—
Shadow more deep than gloomy Mickledore,
Shadow no New Year's sun can charm away.

For he who climbed so many crags of fear,
Sounded such deeps, such heights of knowledge
won,

But never over-passed our heights of love,
Has vanished in a moment—gone to prove
Those peaks beyond our seeing—and we hear
Far up the cleft a brave voice : ' Follow on.'

At Buck Castle

*The Prehistoric Fort of Refuge at the head of
Shoulthwaite Ghyll.*

HERE, in old days of war and lust and loss,
There stood, in fear, the prehistoric men
Who tracked the elk to yonder Shoulthwaite Moss,
And scared the wolf of Armboth to his den.

But though for them a horror as of blood
Lay on the purple heather at their feet,
At least they felt the August sun was good,
And heard the waterfall and called it sweet.

They had no thirst for conquest over sea,
Nor knew the hunger of Imperial Rome ;
Enough to wander on this upland lea,
The stream, the fell, the fort, were all their home.

But none the less when on Helvellyn's height
The watchmen told of foray from afar,
Heroes till death they ranged themselves in fight
And lit their altar to the God of War.

For every goat upon the Armbboth fell,
And every crag above the shining mere,
And every shepherd path they knew so well
In this small world, to them as life was dear.

But we like weary Titans grasp and groan,
From heights of empire wider is our view,
Yet have we lost what he with axe of stone
And triple-rampired fort as patriot knew.

In the Wray Garden

THE fells are bronzed, the beck's are grey and dry,
The winds are laid and all the woods are still,
But to our garden ground a generous will
Sends down sweet song, nor heeds a fierce July;
And our cool sycamore incessantly
Whispers and with a merry dancer's skill
Moves in its leaves, as if it felt the thrill
Of airy elfin music passing by.

Here then, with melodies that never fail
Blest are we though the birds have ceased to sing,
Blest are we though the beck's have lost their
voice;
And if the winds have vanished from the vale,
And July sun its heat and drouth may bring,
In this sequestered garden we rejoice.

The Streamlet at the Wray

I.

HERE where the stream from ancient Sölva's hill
Draws the sweet life and music of the years,
Who wakes at dawn or rests at evening hears
A voice that to his soul doth strength instil.
Sound of the perfect work—the perfect will
That knowing but obedience to the sphere
Moves without present pain or future fear,
To bless all life, all duty to fulfil.

And I who listen in your garden ground
Feel like a guilty thing rebuked and blamed,
For I have done so little yet to bless
With gift of life the weary wilderness.
Yet do I rise, tho' humbled now and shamed,
And go forth stronger to the daily round.

II.

THOU wert the darling of our childish hours,
We loved thee for thy wanton restlessness,
We felt thy nature ours in its excess

Of life and song and laughter and sweet flowers :
Grown up to manhood's prime and strenuous powers
 We watched thee labouring without weariness,
 And knew thy cheer ; as old men we could bless
Thy quiet pools in meditative bowers.

Now sad or glad, alternate hopes and fears
 Not knowing whence they came or whither going,
 All lovers owned affinity with thee ;
But sweetest was thy voice to dying ears
 That heard through change and chance thy waters
 flowing,
 Heaven-sent, Heaven-bound, to Life's un-
 fathomed sea.

The Bewcastle Cross

HWAETRED, Wothgar and Olfwolthu !
Still does the cross ye set stand true
—The slender beacon-sign to tell
Where Alcfrith son of Oswy fell,
The beacon-sign that bids us pray
His soul's high sin be cast away.

Here where the plaintive curlews cry,
Where the sound of the beck comes up like a sigh,
Here where the Roman dead are laid,
Here where the Church's prayers are said,
The great Cross speaks of Oswy's son
Who fell, but knew the fight was won.

No more their watch the Britons keep,
The Roman soldiers lie asleep,
Earl Būeth's castle fades, and fall
The stones he took from the Roman wall,
But fearless of the passing years
The carven pillar's grace uprears,

The beacon-sign so tall and thin
That tells the tale of King Alcfrith's sin.

Long since the cross-head suffered loss,
But firm in socket stands the Cross,
And speechless now with shadow-mouth
The dial gnomonless fronts the south ;
While o'er and under an endless cord
Tells of the life of a endless Lord,
And ever still, with Christ for root,
The grape-vine flourishes, leaf and fruit ;
For they who set this victory sign
Had faith in the life of God's true vine.

Clear to the north the carving stands—
Made by the skill of English hands—
Billet and twisted knot and scroll,
To bid men pray for King Alcfrith's soul.

Lo ! eastward grown, from earth to sky,
The Tree of God that cannot die ;
Not yet irreverential man
Had put dumb creatures under ban ;
There sits the peacock, broods the dove,
The squirrel feeds in peace above.

Fair Tree of Life ! who face to face
In wonder sees your peerless grace,

Harmonious leaf and fruit, the swerve
And balance of each living curve,
Must feel, tho' beaten from his wall,
The Lombard mind was Lord of all,
And that from Rome the Anglian caught
The skill with which the sculptor wrought.

High on the west the Baptist stands,
The Lamb of God is in his hands ;
Beneath, most solemn and most sweet,
Christ spurns the Dragon under feet,
And lifts His tender hand to bless
All dwellers in this wilderness.

Beneath the Christ deep runes we ken—
First writing by the graver's pen
In England left to Englishmen ;
Runes that still keep memorial true
Of Hwaetred, Wothgar and Olfwolthu,
Saying that here they set the sign
To Alcfrith, King of Oswy's line.—
The beacon-sign of victory thin.—
To bid us pray for Alcfrith's sin,
That sin for which we still must pray
Tho' centuries twelve have passed away.

Yea, tho' in battle that he won
He fell for Christ, King Oswy's son,

Twelve centuries' prayer have not sufficed
For him who turned his back on Christ,
Who sinned against the Holy Ghost,
And joined dark Penda's pagan host,
Who tho' of Church and faith he came,
Wrought on the Christian, deeds of shame.

And we who gaze beneath may see
The king for whom we urge the plea—
The king who fought against the Christ—
A hooded hawk is on his wrist,
The hawk that never stooped in vain
On Cumbrian moor, Bernician plain—
The hawk, fit symbol of the word,
Which marked him quarry for the Lord—
The word whose wings of conscience fleet
Brought him smit thro' to Christ's fair feet.

Hwaetred, Wothgar and Olfwolthu !
Still does the cross ye set stand true ;
Still does it tell of Oswy's son,
Who falling knew the victory won,
And bids us at Bewcastle pray,
Lest Alcfrith's soul be cast away.

The Sycamore at High Close

27th August, 1908.

THOUGH no more now the shepherds sit to shear
 Beneath thy murmuring shade, thy massy dome,
 Thou standest still a beacon-sign of home
To all who climb the mountains far and near.
Rest still to men thou profferest, food and cheer
 To valley birds and moorland bees that come,
 Still conjurest from hard rock and fellside loam
This miracle of beauty year by year.

Oh! would to God thou monitory tree,
 Unto our hearts thy power and will were given
 · To seek the sunlight, for the wanderer's sake
Beacon to stand and scatter largesse free,
 From out the nearest things around to make
 Comfort for earth, and joy and song for Heaven.

A Memory

HARD is the road that Duty takes !
I in London—you at the Lakes.
I in London's riot and roar—
You by the peaceful Rydal shore.
I in London's smother and smell—
You in a fragrant Loughrigg dell.
I where no birds flutter and sing—
You where the delicate flycatcher's wing
Poises and dips, while the nestlings call
For mother and food from the garden wall,
Till the sun goes down, and the lilac shale
Of Nab Scar darkens above the dale.
But still I can dream of a cottage blest
With Earth's best happiness—home and rest ;
Can see in the fern the moving fleece
Of the Herdwick mother, who feeds in peace ;
And well can remember how white at morn
Against blue distances shone the thorn ;

Can hear the patter of horses' feet
Below us, that made our silence sweet :
And so, though the city is thronged and loud,
I can still each day be alone in the crowd ;
Can still go the road that Duty takes,
Though I am in London, you at the Lakes.

